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ABSTRACT

Interest centers are designed to meet the needs of the other children in the class while a small group works with the teacher on the Oral Language Program. This manual is intended to assist teachers in organizing the centers, which will be used for about an hour each day. Arrangement of furniture is discussed, suggestions are made for an art center, library center, and self-instruction center, and the daily routine for using each center is outlined. Detailed lesson plans are provided for the first 10 days, with suggestions for further activities. Four appendixes explain how the services of a teacher aide can be used, how to prepare "thinker boxes" of activities and games to develop concepts and skills, the possible extension of interest centers to include sand, water, woodwork, house area, and building block activities, and sample plans for the arrangement of the classroom. (See also SP 004 134.) (MBM)

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THE FIRST 10 DAYS
INTEREST CENTERS

by
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Based on a preliminary study by Dena Dayton

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

		Page
I	What are Interest Centers?	1
II	Setting Up Interest Centers	2
III	The Centers	
	Oral Language	3
	Art	3
	Library	3
	Self-Instruction	3
IV	The Daily Routine	4
V	Rotation, Rounds, and Holding Patterns	6
VI	Lesson Plans (Days 1-10)	7
VII	What Now?	22
	Appendix A: Teacher Aides	23
	Appendix B: Thinker Boxes	24
	Appendix C: Other Interest Centers	25
	Appendix D: Sample Floor Plans	27

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Thanks also are given to the Laboratory's Reading Staff for its cooperation and contributions.

Special thanks are due Mrs. Linda Carstens, a teacher, and Mrs. Tonie Vigil, a teacher aide, who helped test Interest Centers at Coronado School in Albuquerque during the 1969-70 school year.

I WHAT ARE INTEREST CENTERS?

Teachers have always been concerned with individual needs. Even when the class is split into small groups, it is difficult to give children as much individualized attention as they need.

The Oral Language Program is designed for small group instruction. But what about the rest of the class? What are these children doing while the teacher is teaching OLP? Many times they are involved in seat work at their desks as one large group. Are the needs of these children being met as well as they could be?

Interest Centers are one answer to "What shall the rest of the class do while I'm teaching OLP?" Centers help answer "How can I individualize my instruction?"

Interest Centers meet individual needs through small group interaction. Children work in several small groups doing different kinds of tasks. Various areas of the room are used for these simultaneous, but differing activities.

With the children involved in Centers, the teacher is free to work with the OLP group. The teacher aide can move to each Interest Center to talk with and help the children. At other times, the aide can stay in one Center and guide the children in the assigned activity.

This manual is intended to assist teachers to organize Interest Centers while teaching OLP. Centers probably will be used about an hour each day. Detailed lesson plans for the first 10 days are included. It is hoped that the teacher will want to extend and/or expand their use after this time.

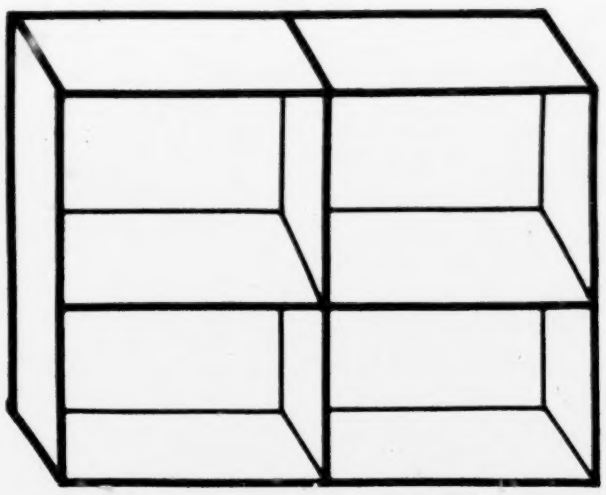
II SETTING UP INTEREST CENTERS

The furniture:

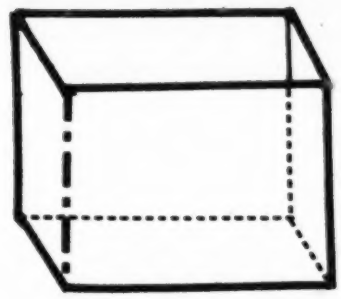
To create an interest centered classroom, use corners, dead spaces, etc. as locations for the various activities. Think of furniture as flexible, rather than as fixed in one position. Furniture has a big part in determining activities. Remember that furniture is movable. Move book shelves from one place to another in the room. Shift a bookcase from one angle to another to serve as a divider. Pull a metal cabinet away from the wall. Use the backs of cabinets, shelves, etc., to display some of the children's work. (See Sample Floor Plans, Appendix D.)

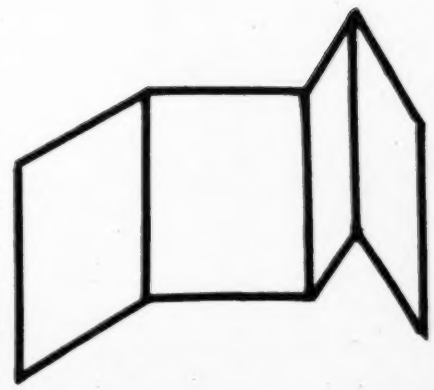
The Centers do not have to be equal in size. Many things are included in the Self-Instruction Center. It would be reasonable to assume the Self-Instruction Center will be larger in size than the Library Center, for example.

If you still need extra dividers after you have shifted your furniture, use cardboard boxes.



Stack them on top of each other to make handy shelves.





Cut off the tops and bottoms. Split them down the side and stand them on end to make handy room dividers.

These cardboard dividers also can serve as bulletin boards.

The activities:

The activities in each Center should be set up in a simple way. Since the teacher will be teaching OLP and since OLP lessons usually last 15-20 minutes, the activities need last only that long. The materials should be such that a child can get them, work with them, and put them away the same way he found them. Good activities demand thought and preparation on the part of the teacher and the teacher aide. As the reader examines each Center described in this manual, it will be seen that many involve skills and activities that probably would want to be taught to the children anyway. The important difference is now they can be done by small groups while OLP is taught.

III THE CENTERS

This manual describes 10 days of activities for four Interest Centers: Oral Language Center, Art Center, Library Center, and the Self-Instruction Center. Use desks as a holding pattern. (See page 6.)

ORAL LANGUAGE CENTER

This is that section of the room where the Oral Language Program is taught. It will be a busy and lively area. First, it must be decided where to place the Oral Language Center and then where to place the other centers.

ART CENTER

This Center should be located near the sink if one is in the room. It is very important to let children express themselves creatively through art, movement, and activities. Demonstrate some possibilities, set out many different kinds of materials, and let the children work with them in any way they wish.

Vary the activities, but keep in mind that children learn through repetition. Repeat the basic activity, but add variations.

Some materials that are handy to have in the Art Center:

1. **Scissors** – An attractive scissor holder can be made easily by brightly painting a coffee can and punching holes in the bottom with a can opener.
2. **Glue** – A type of white glue is much better than paste, can be applied with wooden tongue depressors.
3. **String** – Save scraps of string and yarn for the Art Center.
4. **Crayons** – Crayons should be kept in neat, attractive containers, such as painted orange juice cans.
5. **Paper** – A good supply of paper should be available. Different colors are appealing, but manila is fine. Have construction paper, newsprint, crepe paper, and newspaper available. All these materials can be attractively arranged on shelves in the Art Center.

Art is more than just drawing and coloring. It includes skill in organizing varying sizes, shapes, and textures into a pleasing composition. Learning through using art materials is especially relevant and fun for children if they are allowed to work freely with materials and discover different ideas on their own. Remember: Show the children, guide them, but let them do it! The children (not the teacher or the aide) are responsible for cleaning up.

LIBRARY CENTER

This should be a quiet section of the room. Books of all kinds should be kept here. Let the children make their own books:

1. If the class has taken a field trip, a walk, had an interesting visitor; make a book about this. The children will enjoy looking at it many times. It will be especially interesting if everyone can contribute a page. Each child becomes an author; contributing something of himself.
2. Another favorite is a *photograph book*. At the beginning of the year, take a picture of each child, cover the photos with clear contact paper to preserve them and then make a book. Add pictures of the children as they work and play.
3. A child can make a book of his own and add pages to it as long as he wants. If these are kept in the library section, everyone can share.

Young children can tire quickly of looking at picture books. Add other things to the Library Center. Thinker Boxes (See Appendix B), magazines, paper dolls, writing paper, and pencils can be kept in the Library. A listening post, or a tape recorder with earphones, can also be available, or can be close to the Library Center. For the First Ten Days, specific activities are planned for use in the Library Center. These activities can supplement the reading of books, or take the place of books for a particular day.

Make the Library Center comfortable and cozy. Children enjoy lying on a rug or sitting on a soft stuffed chair or pillow. These can be purchased cheaply at any secondhand store. Perhaps a parent or friend would donate one of these items to the classroom.

SELF-INSTRUCTION CENTER

This Center includes many activities, some of which the teacher may later want to subdivide into smaller centers. For example, the kitchen equipment and the blocks are included in Self-Instruction, but could become centers of their own. (See Other Interest Centers, Appendix C.)

The Self-Instruction Center has many individual and small group educational games. After the games have been explained, the children should be able to use them on their own.

Here are some of the items that can be included in the Self-Instruction Center:

A. **Puzzles** – should be simple primary picture puzzles. It is helpful to have a puzzle rack, or boxes that can be used for storage.

   Before a puzzle is used, put the same number on the back of each piece so they will not get lost or mixed up.

   Individual trays or box covers will help keep puzzles together. Place a pile of trays next to the puzzle rack. A child can hold the tray in front of the puzzle rack, choose his puzzle, pull it onto the tray, go to where he will work with his puzzle and empty the puzzle into the tray. If the children do this carefully, very few puzzle pieces will get lost. The aide can keep a close check to keep puzzles complete.

B. **Colored cubes** – have many uses besides building. They can be used for counting, matching patterns, learning colors, etc.

C. **Animals and insects** – can be included as part of the Self-Instruction Center. Children can observe them and learn how to care for them.

D. **Lotto games** – if the school does not provide these, they are easily made. They can be used for math, social studies, language arts, and other subjects.

E. **Other Educational Table Games** – the best games often are made by the teacher and the aide. Make them colorful, sturdy, and attractive. (See Thinker Boxes, Appendix B.)

IV THE DAILY ROUTINE

The Interest Centers thus described are to be in operation during the time OLP is taught. The teacher may want to expand them into longer teaching periods. However, this is the schedule to be followed before sending the children to the Centers.

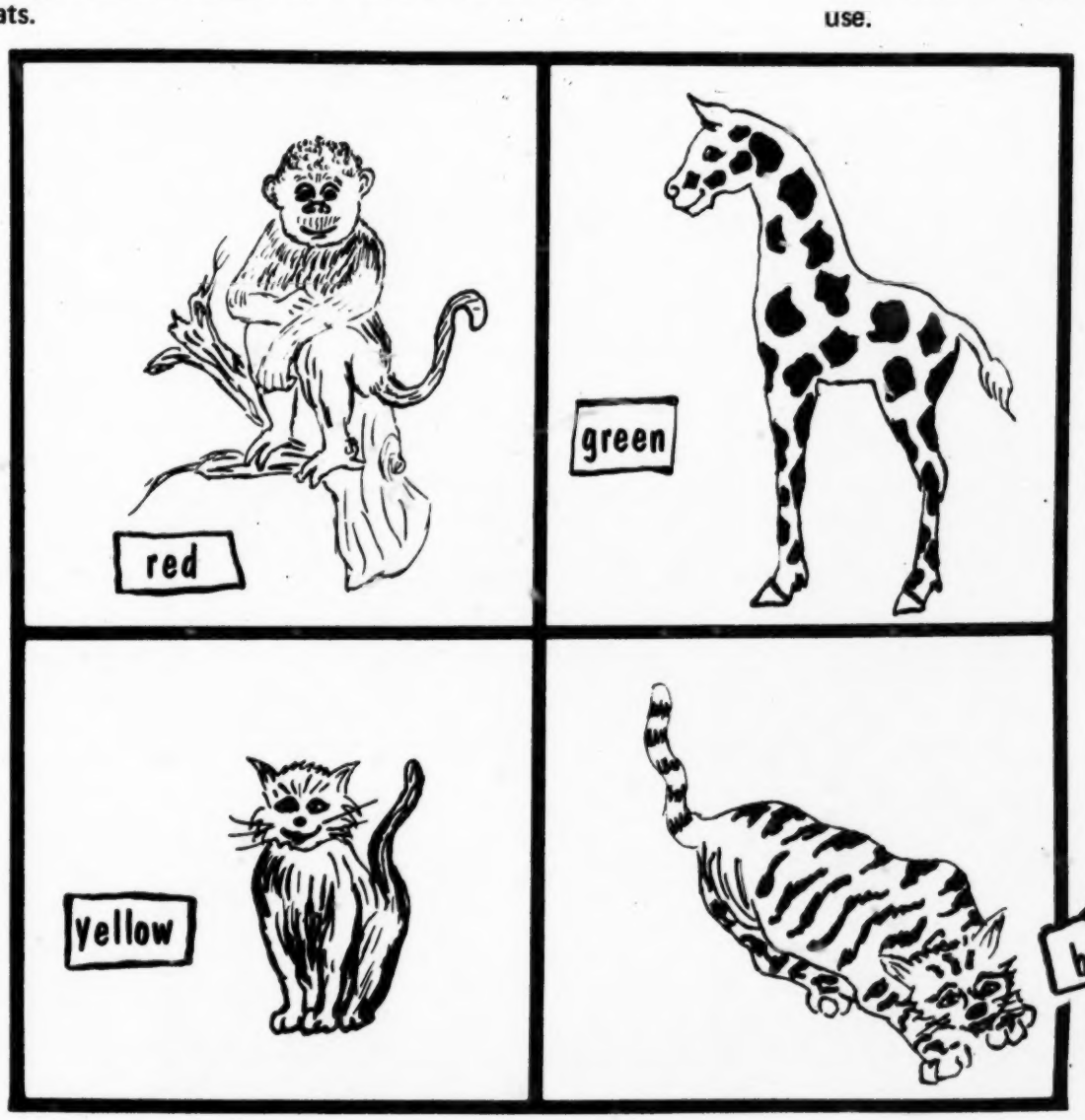
1. Pre-plan the activities for each Center. Think ahead. What must be ready in each Center before the children use that Interest Center?

   If an aide is available, pre-plan with her. Specify her duties in each Center. Is she to move from Center to Center to talk with and help the children or is she to stay in one Center and work with each group of children as they come to that Center? (See Teacher Aides, Appendix A)
2. Carefully and thoroughly explain activities of each Center to be used that day to the entire class. (If a Center is *closed* for the day, tell the class.)
3. Introduce new games (commercial or otherwise) and Thinker Boxes.
   (a) Demonstrate to the class how to play games.
   (b) Tell class what they will learn, e.g., "This Thinker Box will help you learn the alphabet."
4. Send groups to Centers – Round 1.
5. Teach OLP while rest of children are in Centers.
6. Ring bell or use some signaling device to signify cleaning up activities.
7. Groups at Centers clean up and all children return to seats.
8. Begin at Step 4 and repeat the cycle for Round 2, Round 3 and Round 4.

It is very important that the groups move smoothly and the children understand where they are to go. For days one through four, the teacher chooses which Center each group will use. For days five through 10, the groups – as groups – choose Centers. When the children are able, they should be given a chance to individually choose Centers. If there is room for only six children in the Art Center, it is closed for the remainder of a round after being filled. The other children may use the Art Center in the next round.

If the teacher is choosing Centers for the groups, there are two simple ways to help the children understand where they are to work in each round.

1. Use pictures and color codes . . . The children do not have to read to know where to go. For example, the groups can be named for animals (flowers, birds, etc.) Have each Center labeled with a piece of colored paper. Make a chart with a picture of each animal (flower, etc.) name for each group. Next to each picture, make a slit. Use colored cards to correspond with Center labels. Slip each colored card into a slit. The children look at the board, find their group, see what color is next to it, and know which Center to use.



red – Self-Instruction

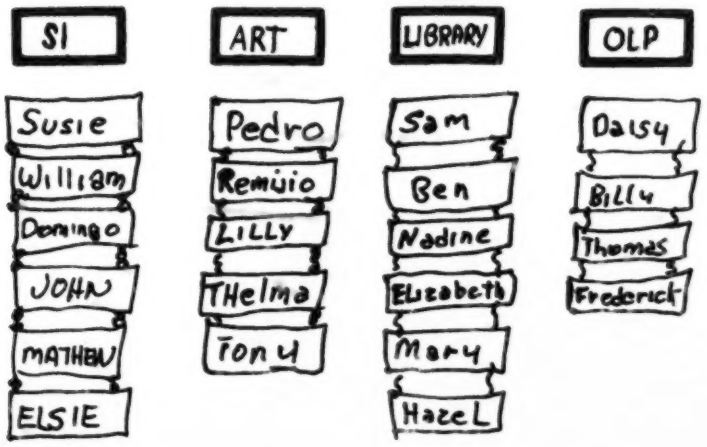
yellow – Art

green – OLP

black – Library

2. Use names of children in each group.

   If the children can read their names, they could be listed in each group. Have each Center labeled with a piece of colored paper. Use colored cards (same color as Centers) to put above each row of names.



When it is time for a new *round,* change the Center colored cards. The groups need not be changed.

V ROTATION, ROUNDS, AND HOLDING PATTERNS

For Interest Centers to be successful, they must be easy to use. Rotation (each small group having the opportunity to use all *open* centers) should be as uncomplicated as possible.

A. Defining Terms

A *Round* is a segment of time during which each group of children is assigned to a Center, works there while the teacher teaches the OLP group, uses the *Holding Pattern,* if necessary, cleans up and returns to their seats when the teacher signals.

Several rounds make a complete *Rotation.* If four centers are operating, then the rotation usually contains four rounds. With three centers, the rotation will usually contain three rounds. Interest Centers should be planned accordingly.

A *Holding Pattern* is a security measure. It usually involves desk activities that any child can do if he finishes his scheduled activity at an Interest Center before the round is complete. The *Holding Pattern* should not be needed in every round. The activities in the Centers probably will fill the time span. If adequate activities are planned, the *Holding Pattern* will seldom be needed.

A *Closed* center is one that is not in use on a particular day.

An *Open* center is one that is in use on a particular day.

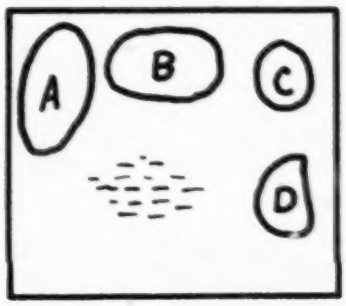
B. Putting Rotation, Rounds, and Holding Patterns Together

This is a standard rotation pattern for a class which has four centers and four OLP groups.

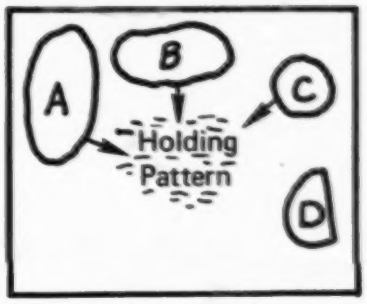
The following is the Basic Rotation Pattern in detail. The Centers used are Self-Instruction, Art, Library, and OLP. For the sake of convenience, the groups are labeled A, B, C, and D.

BASIC ROTATION PATTERN

Round 1



Groups in 4 Centers



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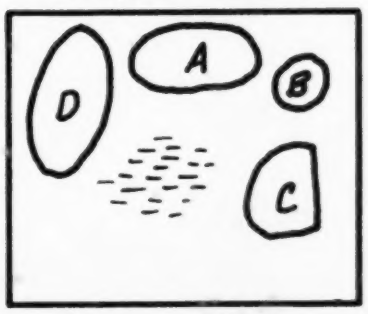
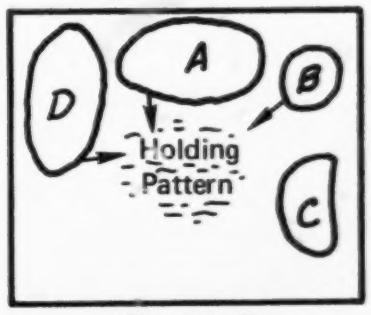
Return to seats

Round 2



Groups in 4 Centers



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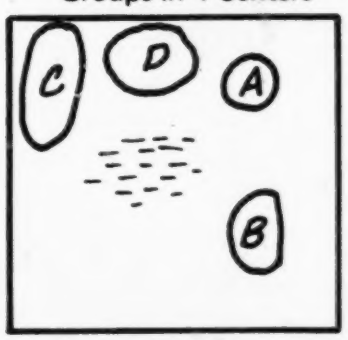
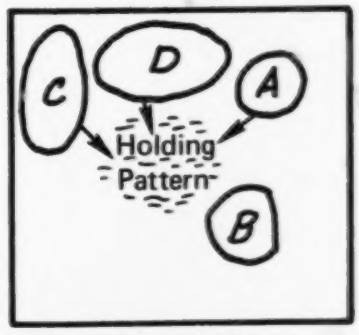
Return to seats

Round 3



Groups in 4 Centers



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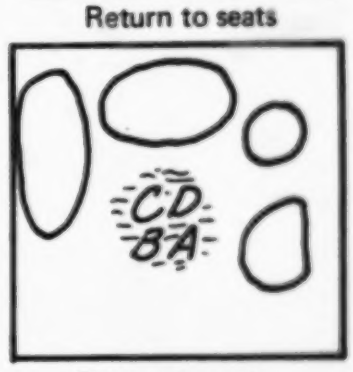
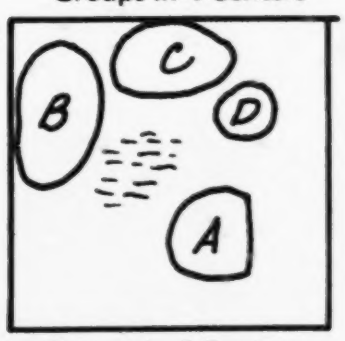
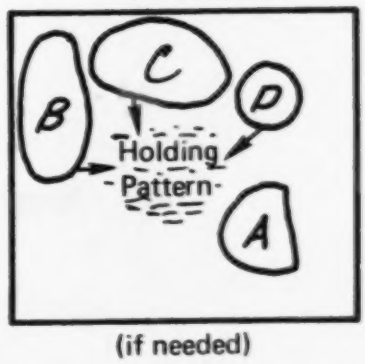


Return to seats

Round 4



Groups in 4 Centers



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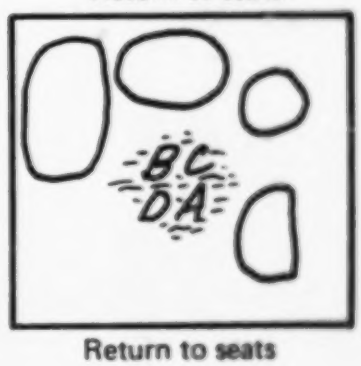
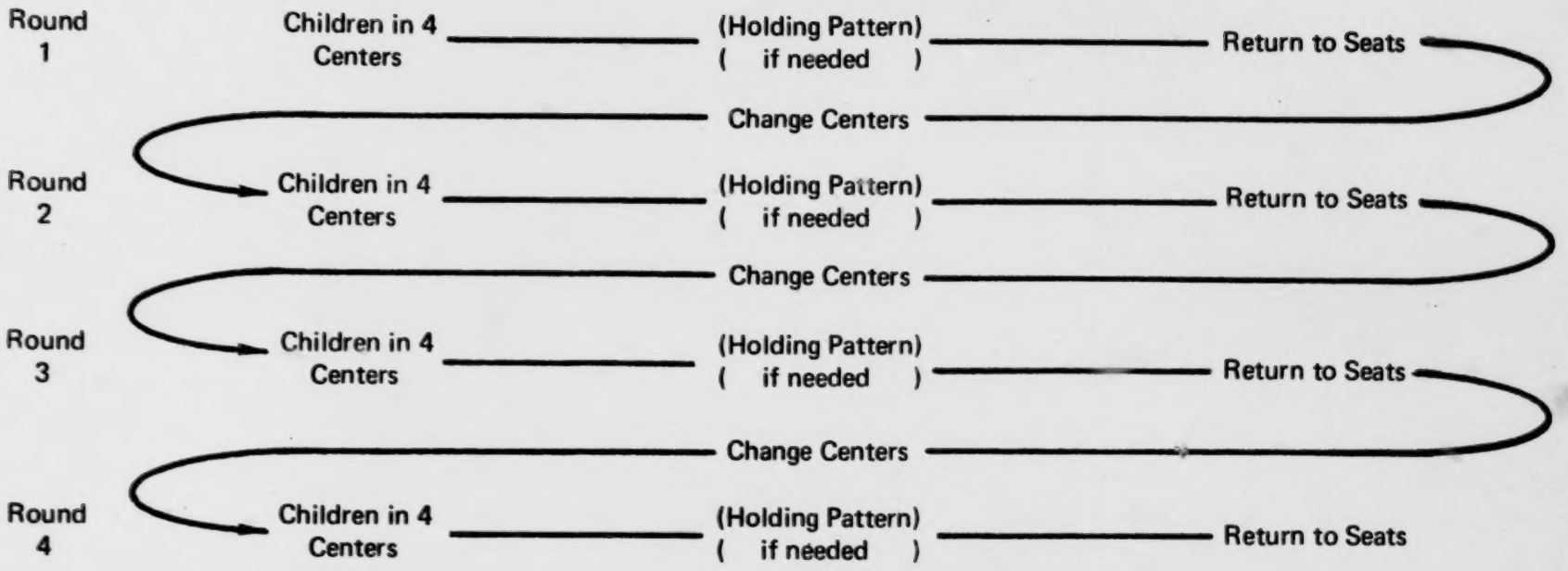


Return to seats



The groups move from Center to Center in rotation. This is one way in which the groups could be rotated so that each child works in each Center during each round.

S.I.	A	D	C	B
Art	B	A	D	C
Library	C	B	A	D
OLP	D	C	B	A
	Round 1	Round 2	Round 3	Round 4

Complete rotation

C. Modifications

Modifications may be needed in the Basic Rotation Pattern for various reasons. The teacher should feel free to adapt it so that it best fits the class. For example –

If the teacher has three OLP groups, she may want to set up three centers instead of four.

If the teacher has three groups, she still may want to set up four centers, but keep one closed each day. This way, she can vary the centers that are open to the children day by day.

The teacher may have a specific activity planned for one center that requires more time than one round allows. If so, she might close one of the other centers that day, and let each group work twice in the center with the longer activity.

If the teacher has two small OLP groups, she may want to move them together when going to Interest Centers. Then, when it is their turn to work with the teacher, she dismisses one to the Holding Pattern or a Center, and works with the other. The two groups then exchange places. After both small groups have done OLP, the end of the round should be signalled, and they should be put together during the next round.

These are examples of ways to modify the Basic Rotation Pattern. Since the lesson plans for the First Ten Days are geared to four groups and four centers, it is strongly recommended that the teacher use the basic pattern. If this is not feasible, even for just the first 10 days, the lesson activities should be modified to fit the rotation plan.

VI LESSON PLANS

Lesson plans for the first days are basic, but are not rigid. They can be changed or built upon as the abilities of the children demand.

Day 1	Days 1-4: Teacher assigns centers to each group for each round.

1. Oral Language Center

Teach OLP lesson to each group.

2. Library Center

Behavioral Objective:
. . . Child will browse through books and magazines.

Materials:

1. library books
2. class made books
3. any individually made books
4. magazines

How:

Child will select book and/or magazine.

3. Art Center

Behavioral Objectives:
. . . Child will experiment with clay using rolling pins, cans, and boxes.
. . . Child will make circles and squares with clay using cans and boxes.

Materials:

1. clay
2. miniature rolling pins
3. cans of various sizes for cutting out circles
4. boxes of various sizes for cutting out squares

How:

Show children equipment at Art Center.
Tell children they may use equipment.
Tell children to try to figure out different ways to use the boxes and cans.

4. Self-Instruction Center

Behavioral Objective:
. . . Child will play with at least one activity.

Materials:

1. blocks
2. playhouse equipment
3. animals
   a. food for animals
   b. appropriate housing
4. dolls
5. cars
6. commercial game(s)

How:

Child chooses activity.

5. Desks (Holding Pattern)

See page 6.

Day 2	Days 1-4: Teacher assigns centers to each group for each round.

1. Oral Language Center

Teach OLP lesson to each group.

2. Library Center

Behavioral Objective:
. . . Child will select and paste shapes on construction paper to make realistic or abstract designs.

Materials:

1. pre-cut squares and circles of assorted colors and sizes
2. 8½" x 11" dark pieces of construction paper (at least one for each child)
3. crayons (optional)

How:

Child will paste squares and circles onto larger piece of paper to make realistic or abstract pictures.
Child will use crayons to add details; e.g. faces (optional).

3. Art Center

Behavioral Objective:
. . . Child will draw realistic or abstract design on paper plate.

Materials:

1. paper plates (one for each child)

   or

   paper bags could be used. Ask children to bring bags from home prior to Day Two.
2. crayons

How:

Tell child to color design on front and back of paper plate.

4. Self-Instruction Center

Behavioral Objective:
. . . Child will play with at least one activity.

Materials:

1. blocks
2. playhouse equipment
3. animals
   a. food for animals
   b. appropriate housing for animals
4. commericial game(s)
5. dolls
6. cars

How:

Child chooses activity.

5. Desks (Holding Pattern)

See page 6.

Day 3	Days 1-4: Teacher assigns centers to each group for each round.

1. **Oral Language Center**

   Teach OLP lesson to each group.

2. **Library Center**

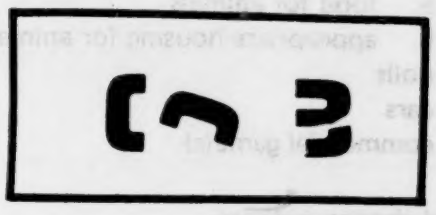
   Behavioral Objectives:
   . . . Child will browse through books and magazines.
   . . . Child will use one of two Thinker Boxes.

   Materials:

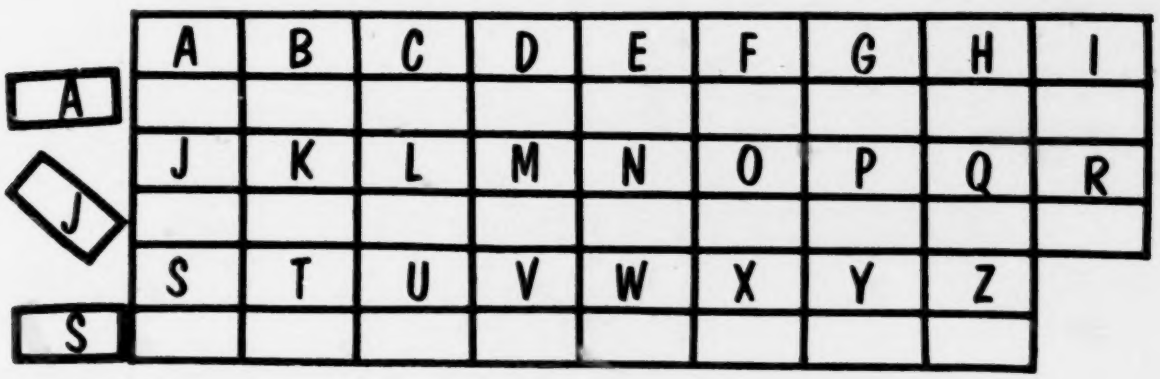
   1. books and magazines
   2. Thinker Box: Alphabet Shapes — (Straight or Curved)
      a. box
      b. 26 oaktag or colored posterboard — 2" x 2" cards
         On each card, print a capital letter of the alphabet.
      c. two title cards:

Card 1

Card 2



3. Thinker Box: Alphabet Match
   a. box
   b. folded sheet blocked into 54 squares (nine squares across and six squares down)
      Rows 1, 3, and 5 have capital letters of the alphabet printed on the sheet with a felt pin
      Rows 2, 4, and 6 are left blank
   c. oaktag cards, cut to fit into the blank squares, have a capital letter of the alphabet printed on each one



How:

Child will select book and/or magazine.

a. Thinker Box: Alphabet Shapes
   Child traces letter on card with his finger and decides if the lines are straight or curved. He then places each in the proper category under the title card.
b. Thinker Box: Alphabet Match
   Child spreads out the folded sheet on the floor or table. He goes through the pile of alphabet cards (that are mixed up) and matches the oaktag letters to the printed letters on the sheet.

3. Art Center

Behavioral Objectives:
. . . Child will work with partner today and tomorrow.
. . . One child will trace the outline of partner's body on paper.
(Tomorrow child traced will do the tracing of the partner.)
. . . Partners will cut and color silhouette.

Materials:

1. pre-cut rectangles of butcher paper (one for each team and large enough to fit largest child in class)
2. crayons
3. scissors

How:

Children choose partners within group.
One child lies down on paper on floor.
Partner traces silhouette of first child.
They both cut out silhouette.
They both color silhouette.

4. Self-Instruction Center

Behavioral Objective:
. . . Child will play with at least one activity.

Materials:

1. blocks
2. playhouse equipment
3. animals
   a. food for animals
   b. appropriate housing for animals
4. dolls
5. cars
6. commercial game(s)

How:

Child chooses activity.

5. Desks (Holding Pattern)

See page 6.

Day 4	Days 1-4: Teacher assigns centers to each group for each round.

1. Oral Language Center

Teach OLP lesson to each group.

Behavioral Objectives:
Same as Day 3 (use same Thinker Boxes)
CHILDREN LEARN THROUGH REPETITION AND VARIATION. SOME ACTIVITIES CAN BE REPEATED. DO NOT OVERDO ANY ONE ACTIVITY.

Materials:

Same as Day 3

How:

Same as Day 3

3. Art Center

Behavioral Objectives:
Same as Day 3 except child traced yesterday does tracing today and child who traced yesterday will be traced today.

Materials:

Same as Day 3

How:

Same as Day 3

4. Self-Instruction Center

Behavioral Objectives:
. . . Child will play at least one activity.

Materials:

1. blocks
2. playhouse equipment
3. animals
   a. food for the animals
   b. appropriate housing for the animals
4. dolls
5. cars
6. commercial game(s)

How:

Child chooses activity.

5. Desks (Holding Pattern)

See page 6.

Day 5	Starting Day 5: Groups as groups take turns choosing centers.

1. Oral Language Center

Teach OLP lesson to each group.

2. Library Center

Behavioral Objectives:
. . . Child will play sensory game.
. . . Child will identify OLP objects by feel.
. . . Child will call OLP objects by name.

Materials:

1. paper bag (you might have three separate bags with objects inside)
2. about 3 OLP objects that child has learned in previous OLP lessons (If you have three bags, you will need three objects for each bag)

How:

Child holds bag.
Another child reaches in bag and feels object.
That child guesses object and names it.
Other children tell him if he's right.

3. Art Center

Behavioral Objectives:
. . . Child will make collage.
. . . Child will select materials from those on table.
. . . Child will glue objects to 8½" x 11" paper.

Materials:

1. 8½" x 11" pieces of construction paper or oaktag (one for each child)
2. glue
3. variety of materials
   a. pieces of broken chalk
   b. pieces of fabric
   c. pieces of colored paper

How:

Child will combine materials as he wants.
Child will glue materials to larger paper.
DO NOT PUT TOO MANY MATERIALS ON THE TABLE. TOO MANY THINGS MAY CONFUSE THE CHILD.
REMEMBER THIS IS THEIR FIRST TRY AT MAKING A COLLAGE.

4. Self-Instruction Center

Behavioral Objective:
. . . Child will play at least one activity.

Materials:

1. blocks
2. playhouse equipment
3. animals
   a. food for the animals
   b. appropriate housing for the animals
4. dolls
5. cars
6. commercial game(s)
7. add a few commercially made puzzles

Retire something already in this center if you feel it is necessary.

How:

Child chooses activity.

5. Desks (Holding Pattern)

See page 6.

Day 6	Groups take turns as groups choosing centers.

1. Oral Language Center

Teach OLP lesson to each group.

2. Library Center

Behavioral Objectives:
. . . Child will cut picture into four pieces to make puzzle.
. . . Child will assemble pieces into puzzle.

Materials:

1. pictures from magazines pasted on oaktag
2. scissors
3. envelopes (can be made by folding 8½" x 11" construction paper in half and stapling 2 sides)

How:

Child selects picture.
Child cuts picture into 4 big pieces.
Child puts his picture puzzle together.
Child puts puzzle in envelope.
Child exchanges puzzles with friends.

3. Art Center

Behavioral Objective:
. . . Child will experiment with chalk as medium for expression.

Materials:

1. colored pieces of chalk
2. construction paper

How:

Child chooses paper.
Child chooses piece(s) of chalk.
Child experiments with chalk on paper.

4. Self-Instruction Center

Behavioral Objective:
. . . Child will play at least one activity.

Materials:

1. blocks
2. playhouse equipment
3. animals
   a. food for the animals
   b. appropriate housing for the animals
4. dolls
5. cars
6. commerical game(s)
7. puzzles
8. add sensory game from Day 5 of the Library Center

How:

Child chooses activity.

5. Desks (Holding Pattern)

See page 6.

Day 7	Groups as groups will take turns choosing centers.

1. Oral Language Center

Teach OLP lesson to each group.

2. Library Center

Behavioral Objectives:
. . . Child will browse through books and magazines.
. . . Child will classify items according to rough and smooth.
. . . Child may classify items according to his own design; e.g. by color, size, etc.

Materials:

1. books and magazines
2. large piece of paper divided into two squares
3. a "rough" item is pasted in corner of one square and a "smooth" item is pasted in the corner of the other square
4. "rough" and "smooth" items for sorting. These are only suggestions. You have other ideas.
   a. "rough":
      - sand paper
      - some rocks, e.g. lava
      - buttons (some are rough)
      - wood
      - pine cone
      - sea shell
      - burlap
      - crepe paper
      - raw carrot

   b. "smooth":
      - apple
      - plastic car
      - plastic glass or cup
      - milk carton
      - buttons (some are smooth)
      - small mirror

How:

Child will feel item.
Child will identify as "rough" or "smooth" and will place in appropriate category.
Child does not have to name items – some will not yet be in his vocabulary. (However, if you use OLP items, you might want the child to name the item.)

3. Art Center

Behavioral Objective:
. . . Child will experiment with clay using different kinds of utensils.

Materials:

1. clay
2. regular or play knives and forks, and spoons
3. tongue depressors
4. rolling pins (minature)

(Children used clay on Day 1. Today they are repeating the experience, but are using new things with the clay. CHILDREN LEARN THROUGH REPETITION, BUT VARIATIONS ARE SOMETIMES NECESSARY TO MAINTAIN INTEREST.)

How:

Child may use equipment to experiment with clay.

Day 8	Groups as groups take turns choosing centers.

1. Oral Language Center

Teach OLP lesson to each group.

2. Library Center

Behavioral Objectives:
. . . Child will classify rocks in any way he chooses. (Rocks could have been collected by children during walk around school grounds or during recess time.)
. . . Child will classify buttons in any way he chooses.

Materials:

1. rocks of different textures, sizes, etc.
2. buttons of different colors, textures, sizes, etc.

How:

Child sorts rocks and buttons in any classification he wishes.

3. Art Center

Behavioral Objective:
. . . Child will use pipe cleaners to make any design or sculpture he wants.

Materials:

1. pipe cleaners

How:

Child twists, bends, and shapes pipe cleaners to make whatever he wants.

4. Self-Instruction Center

Behavioral Objective:
. . . Child will experiment with puppets and puppet stage.

Materials:

1. puppets — two, at least
   puppets can be commercially made or homemade
   Refer to SWCEL's *Make a Puppet and Use It*.
2. puppet stage (optional)
   A puppet stage can be made from a cardboard box.

How:

Show puppets to children.
Talk about use of stage.

5. Desks (Holding Pattern)

See page 6.

4. Self-Instruction Center

Behavioral Objective:

. . . Child will play at least one activity.

Materials:

1. blocks
2. playhouse equipment
3. animals
   a. food for the animals
   b. appropriate housing for the animals
4. dolls
5. cars
6. commercial game(s)
7. puzzles
8. sensory game (Day 5 of Library Center)

Retire something in this center if you feel it is necessary.

How:

Child chooses activity.

5. Desks (Holding Pattern)

See page 6.

Day 9	Groups as groups take turns choosing centers.

1. Oral Language Center

Teach OLP lesson to each group.

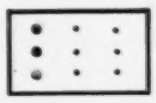
2. Library Center

Behavioral Objectives:
. . . Child will repeat two patterns of teacher's using pegs and pegboards.
. . . Child will make his own designs.
OR (if you do not have pegs and pegboards)
. . . Child will repeat two patterns of teacher's using construction paper cut-outs and construction paper sheets.
. . . Child will make his own designs.

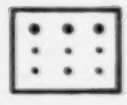
Materials:

A. 1. pegboards
2. pegs
3. two sheets of paper showing teacher's design; for example:

blue pegs down left side



Have as many circles here as on child's pegboard

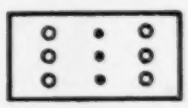


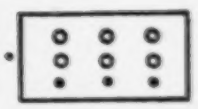
red pegs across top

OR

B. 1. two sheets of paper showing teacher's designs

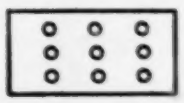
blue circles in middle





red circles along bottom

2. sheets of paper with circles drawn on (can be dittoed)



3. small colored circles (to match teacher's) to be put on larger paper ● ● ● ○ ○ ○

How:

Child copies two designs specified by teacher.
Child can make his own design.

3. Art Center

Behavioral Objectives:
. . . Child will make collage using rocks used in Library Center of Day 8.
. . . Child will use leaves, twigs, or the like found on a walk or during recess.

Materials:

1. 8½" x 11" pieces of construction paper or oaktag (one for each child)
2. glue
3. variety of materials
   a. leaves
   b. twigs
   c. rocks
   d. dirt
   e. sand

4. Self-Instruction Center

Behavioral Objective:
. . . Child will experiment with puppets and puppet stage.

Materials:

1. puppets – two, at least
   puppets can be commercially made or homemade
   Refer to SWCEL's *Make a Puppet and Use It.*
2. puppet stage (optional)
   A puppet stage can be made from a cardboard box.
3. add another puppet

How:

Show puppets to children.
Talk about use of stage.

5. Desks (Holding Pattern)

See page 6.

Day 10	Groups as groups will take turns choosing centers.

1. Oral Language Center

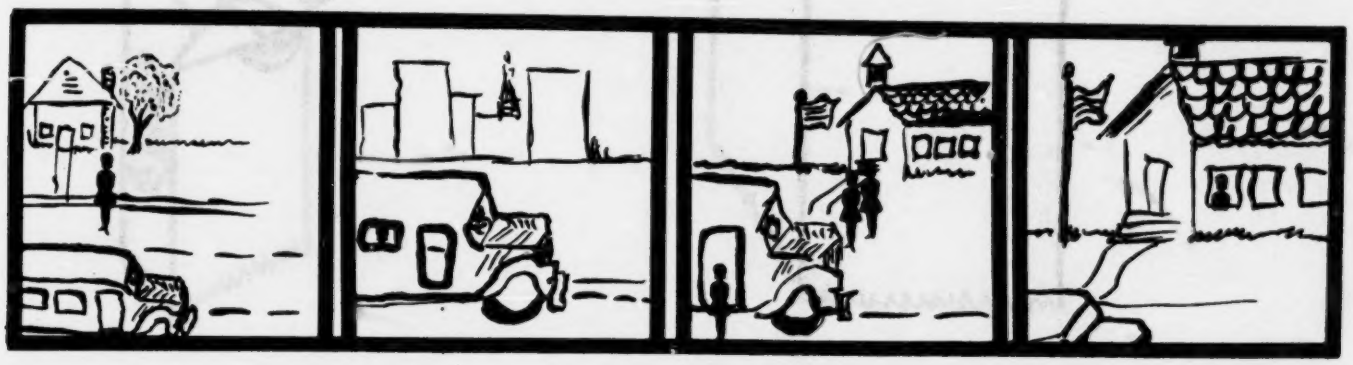
Teach OLP lesson to each group.

2. Library Center

Behavioral Objectives:
. . . Child will sort pictures into sequence from left to right.
. . . Child may (if he is able) tell the story to another child.

Materials:

1. about four sets of pictures (4 pictures per set) depicting a story. (Use stories familiar to children.)



2. (Optional) sheet of paper blocked into 4 squares and numbered

1	2	3	4

How:

Child will use one picture set and arrange the pictures in sequence.
If he is able, he may tell the story to another child either in English or his native language.

3. Art Centers

Behavioral Objectives:
. . . Child will cut head from magazine.
. . . Child will paste head to paper.
. . . Child will draw body for head.

Materials:

1. magazines
2. paste – 8½" x 11"
3. scissors
4. paper 8½" x 11
5. crayons

How:

Child will select picture of head from magazine.
Child will cut out head and paste to paper.
Child will draw body for head.

4. Self-Instruction Center

Behavioral Objectives:

. . . Child will not use any of the items in this center.

. . . Child will make a puppet (Refer to SWCEL's *Make a Puppet and Use It.*)

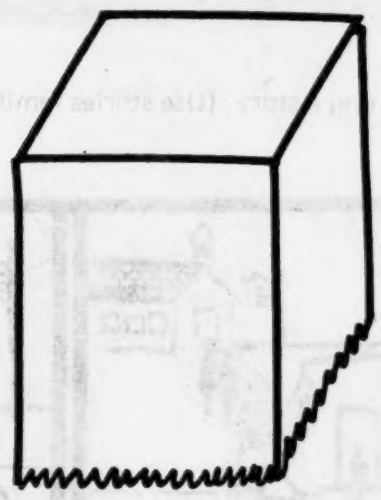
Materials:

1. paper bag puppet
2. crayons
3. paper bag
4. odds and ends to paste on bag for hair, etc. (optional)
5. paste

How:

Color bag.

Paste on odds and ends for hair, arms, etc.



5. Desks (Holding Pattern)

See page 6.

VII WHAT NOW?

Now that the teacher has used lesson plans for 10 days, how can she keep the Interest Centers going? The important thing to remember is that ALL of the children are learning in several small groups. They are able to work with a variety of materials, and develop important social skills to make school a happy experience. They learn to work together, to share, to help each other in an activity.

The first 10 days of Interest Centers are well structured. The children become accustomed to going to the various Centers in turn, and know what is expected of them. The 10 days of lesson plans and rotation patterns are basic. They should be built upon to create new activities and other Interest Centers. (See Other Interest Centers, Appendix C.)

The teacher may want to plan an ongoing project in any one Center. That is, the children do one project for two days or more. Suppose the teacher plans to have the children make toilet roll bugs in the Art Center. If the teacher thinks this activity would last longer than the 15 or 20 minutes she would be teaching OLP, then she would do it in two days. On the first day, the children paint the toilet rolls. They cut out wings for the roll bug. If time permits and if the roll is dry they would attach the wings to the roll. On the second day, they would add antennae, feet, and whatever else is needed. A variety of materials should be available for this – e.g., colored construction paper, pipe cleaners, toothpicks, twigs, yarn, string, etc.

When the Interest Centers are running smoothly during OLP time, the teacher may want to expand the concept and use Centers throughout more of the day. (See Appendix D for ways to arrange classroom furniture for an experience centered approach to learning.)

These are only a few suggestions on what to do in Centers. The possibilities are unlimited.

Some Suggestions:

Keep a couple magic slates in the Self-Instruction or the Library Center.

Fold paper in half. Tear out a shape. Child decides what the shape looks like and fills in the features with crayons. He colors it and pastes it on a background.

Glue smooth rocks together. Add construction paper features or paint to make animal or whatever else the child wants.

Make a pinwheel.

Paste cotton on construction paper. Cotton will be a cloud. Color in any details desired.

Cut pictures from magazines, old workbooks, etc. to classify

- things that fly
- things we see
- things we hear
- things we feel
- farm animals
- zoo animals
- animals that live in the ground
- animals that live in the water
- kinds of plants

Do finger painting.

Do straw painting.

Do easel painting.

Use crayons to illustrate a favorite story book character or field trip.

Use dry chalk on wet paper drawings. Cover table with newspapers. Dip drawing paper in bucket of water to keep it wet.

Use wet chalk on dry paper. Cover table with newspapers. Dip chalk in container of water.

Make paper mache puppets . . . perhaps one part each day until it is completed.

Draw designs on cloth with crayons.

Cut out cloth and paste on paper to make self-portraits or designs.

Print on cloth. Use potato or carrot stamp. Cut potato or carrot in half with one clean stroke, and the design is cut into the surface. Add a bit of varnish to a small amount of easel paint. Pour the paint on a piece of glass, tile, or any nonporous surface and use as a stamp pad.

OR

Cut shapes from old inner tubes and glue sections to cardboard or wood boards.

OR

Cut strawberries, lemons, any other fruit to use as printing stamp. Use food coloring on makeup sponges for the paint.

Paint pictures on blocks of wood.

Have pictures of fish. Children find the ones that look most like triangles, squares, etc.

Have pictures of or have real leaves. Let children find ones that look long, thin, pointed, narrow, or wide, and the same or different.

Give the children a box of shells. Let them decide how to sort them.

Use Tinker Toys.

String beads or paint macaroni and string it.

Use a magnet and have magnetic and nonmagnetic objects.

Make spatter prints of groups of leaves. Place leaf on a sheet of paper and spatter ink or paint around the edge of it. Dip toothbrush into a pan of ink or thin poster paint. Hold brush – bristle side up – over the leaf. Scrape the bristles with a thin stick and the paint will spatter a pattern around the edge of the leaf.

Trace hand shape on two pieces of felt cloth. Cut two halves, stuff, and sew.

Use differently shaped uncooked macaroni. Children can sort shapes. They can paint the macaroni and can glue it to construction paper in groups or in designs.

APPENDIX A
TEACHER AIDES

The assistance of a teacher aide can be invaluable during the Interest Center time.

Under the teacher's direction the aide can prepare and set up many of the materials in each Center. For example, she can arrange the books in the Library Center, cut paper into appropriate shapes and sizes, make Thinker Boxes, set out the clay containers and other supplies needed for the Art Center, etc.

Her most important task is to listen to and interact with the children. She can move from one Center to another, talking with the children, asking questions about what they are doing, and encouraging language development and cognitive growth.

Instead of moving from Center to Center, the teacher may sometimes want the aide to work with a particular activity in one Center for the day. She would work with each group as it moves to that particular center. This may mean helping the children with an art project, or doing an OLP follow-up lesson, or giving a number readiness activity.

Refer to SWCEL's *Teacher-Teacher Aide Companion Training Manual* for a more detailed job description of teacher aides in Interest Centers.

APPENDIX B
THINKER BOXES

Thinker Boxes are boxes of activities and games for children that can be made by the teacher or teacher aide and are designed to replace pencil and paper activities.

Each Thinker Box contains a fun learning game or task which develops a concept or skill needed for school. They provide work relating to daily lessons and can be adjusted to the learning level of the pupils. Thinkers provide independent and individualized instruction. One child may use a Thinker Box, or two to three children may work together on a Thinker.

How to make a Thinker Box

1. Collect boxes from merchants. Shirt boxes are excellent.
2. Use everyday objects – e.g., magazines, cards, paper, flannel, magic marker, etc.
3. Decide the teaching objective of each box.
4. Make materials and put in box.

What to put in a Thinker Box?

What readiness skills do the children need to learn? For ideas, look at the workbook and pencil and paper activities the children are doing. Change these from paper seatwork activities to Thinker Box activities. Each Thinker Box should have a specific teaching objective. The tasks and activities in a Thinker Box can be adapted to the culture and locality of the class. Kinds and uses of Thinker Boxes are practically unlimited.

Refer to SWCEL'S *Thinkers: Ideas for Independent Activities* for more suggestions on Thinker Boxes.

APPENDIX C
OTHER INTEREST CENTERS

After the First Ten Days the teacher may want to expand the Interest Centers. The teacher may want to retire some of the ones she has been using to add variety to the activities. Here are some suggestions for other Interest Centers.

1. Sand

Sifting, measuring, and just feeling sand is a good experience for children. If the classroom does not have a sandbox, a big, round, hard plastic swimming pool can be used. Sandbox equipment includes:

A. Flour sifters can be used to shake and sift sand.
B. Funnels made either of plastic or aluminum can be used.
C. A set of plastic measuring cups gives children a chance to find out about different units of measure.
D. Aluminum jello molds can help a child learn to pour into a limited area.
E. Play cars and trucks are used for dramatic play.
F. Shovels and pails.
G. If a scale is available, children can first weigh a container of dry sand, then wet it and weigh again. They can discover the difference between the wet and dry sand.

2. Water

When children work with water they will learn something about pouring. They can talk about how the water feels. This area is easily set up if a sink is in the room. Otherwise, one or two big tubs can be used. The water area should be in an out of the way part of the room. The children should wear plastic smocks to keep their clothes dry. Have a mop nearby to make cleaning up easy.

It is important to have a shelf in the water area. While the containers are sitting on the shelf, the children can pour water into them. Children can learn many things if they are free to discover and work with the water as they wish.

Materials that will help the children learn through self-discovery are:

A. Measuring cups (preferably clear plastic)
With a set of measuring cups children can learn about different units of measure; for example, discovering that two one-half cups make a whole cup. Mark the whole cup measure at the halfway mark so the children can easily see exactly what one-half cup means.

B. Measuring spoons
Children can learn about measures by using measuring spoons. The children can discover that three teaspoons make a tablespoon.

C. Ice cube trays (preferably soft plastic)
While the tray is sitting on a shelf, the children can pour water in the sections. This will help them see that water (and other liquids) can be divided into many smaller sections and that there is still the same amount of water. If some of the ice cube tray sections can be taken out of the tray, the children have an even better chance to see:
1) what water does when the sections are taken out,
2) what water does when it has to stay in the sections.

D. Funnels (plastic or aluminum)
The children find out that water goes down. This activity also develops hand-eye coordination.

E. Soap
A cold water soap is best. The children will enjoy making soap bubbles by doing different things. It stimulates their imagination. They can see many things in soap bubbles.

F. Hand egg beater
A hand egg beater can be hard to use. A child discovers that as he turns the handle one way the beaters go the other way. He can also discover that it does his work quicker.

G. Food coloring
Food coloring comes in sets of plastic bottles in four colors; blue, green, yellow, red. The children can be taught to squeeze the bottles gently so one or two drops come out. This is enough food coloring for them to use at one time. They discover that mixing two colors will make a third and still different color. Food coloring can make water play different and interesting.

H. Straws
Plastic straws are best. There are a variety of ways that children will use straws. One discovery can be to observe what happens when they either blow out or suck in.

3. Woodwork

Woodworking experiences will appeal to both boys and girls. Children will make anything ranging from an airplane to their own creation. If easel or poster paints are set up in a classroom, the children might paint their woodwork creation. If a regular work table is not available, a heavy piece of board can be used. Put it either on the floor or on an extra table. As a safety measure, it is important that no other children be near the woodwork area except those working there. The number of children who work in the wood area depends on how big the table is. If the table is three by three and one-half feet, only two children should work there at one time.

If this area is set up well, it could be one of the most exciting working places in the room. Materials to be used in this area are:

A. Nails
Two or three different lengths of thin nails with big heads should be available. Get containers for keeping the different sizes of nails (such as orange juice cans). On the outside of the cans, scotch tape a sample of the size of nail that belongs in that container. The children can match the nails to the sample on the outside of the can.

B. Hammer

Have different weights and different sizes of hammers. There should be enough hammers so each child at the area may have one.

C. Saws

The saw should be light and short enough to be easily handled by children.

D. Vise

The children learn that a vise is used to hold the wood for sawing. They learn how it is opened and closed.

4. House Area

This is an area that will help the children role play and dramatize. They pretend to be somebody else. Often children really need to be angry, sad, or happy. They can do this by pretending to be someone other than themselves. Sometimes children need to be a baby again, and can do this in a house area. Having this area in a corner by a window makes it cozy. Put curtains over a window to make it more homelike.

A. Miniature furniture
   1. Stove, refrigerator, sink
   2. Little kitchen table, small chairs or stools
   3. Shelves for dishes, cooking utensils, pots, pans, etc.

   If the school doesn't provide the above items, packing crates and boxes can be covered and painted to be used as furniture.

B. Dress up clothing
   1. Hats, shoes (both men's and women's, old jewelry
   2. Skirts, blouses, dresses, aprons, men's ties, shirts

C. Kitchenware
   1. Play silverware, plates, cups, saucers, pots, pans, mixing bowls
   2. Artificial fruit, ice cube trays, etc.
   3. Egg beater, plastic measuring cups, wooden spoon

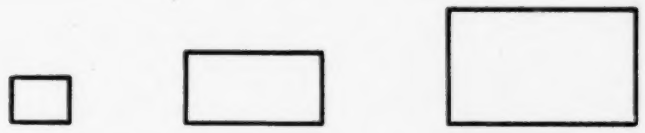
D. Dolls
   1. Dolls (male and female) that look like the children
   2. Crib, blanket, sheets

E. Play telephones (at least two)
   1. Telephone book

5. Blocks

A well supplied block area can lend itself to complex block building. It takes some careful thinking to build a solid block structure. Children can also discover mathematical relationships by working with blocks. The blocks should be arranged on the shelves in a way that the children can understand the organization:

1. Put blocks of the same size together.
2. Arrange them from left to right (the same way we read).
3. Put the smallest blocks on the shelf first.
4. Put the next size block to the right of the smallest block so it looks like this:



5. After all the blocks are satisfactorily arranged on the shelves, trace around each different sized block and tape the paper shape on the shelf where that size belongs. When all the blocks are off the shelves, this will help the children put the blocks back into the correct place.

Other useful things that can be used with blocks:

1. Toy cars, trucks, animals or other props help children build different structures.
2. After a field trip the children could come back and try to build something that they saw. If water was seen on the trip, a strip of blue paper could be used to show it.

When first beginning to use blocks, children may need a few open ended suggestions. It sometimes helps for the teacher to sit down and begin a building by herself. Then as the children become interested, the teacher can fade out, leaving them to make their own creations.

APPENDIX D
SAMPLE FLOOR PLANS

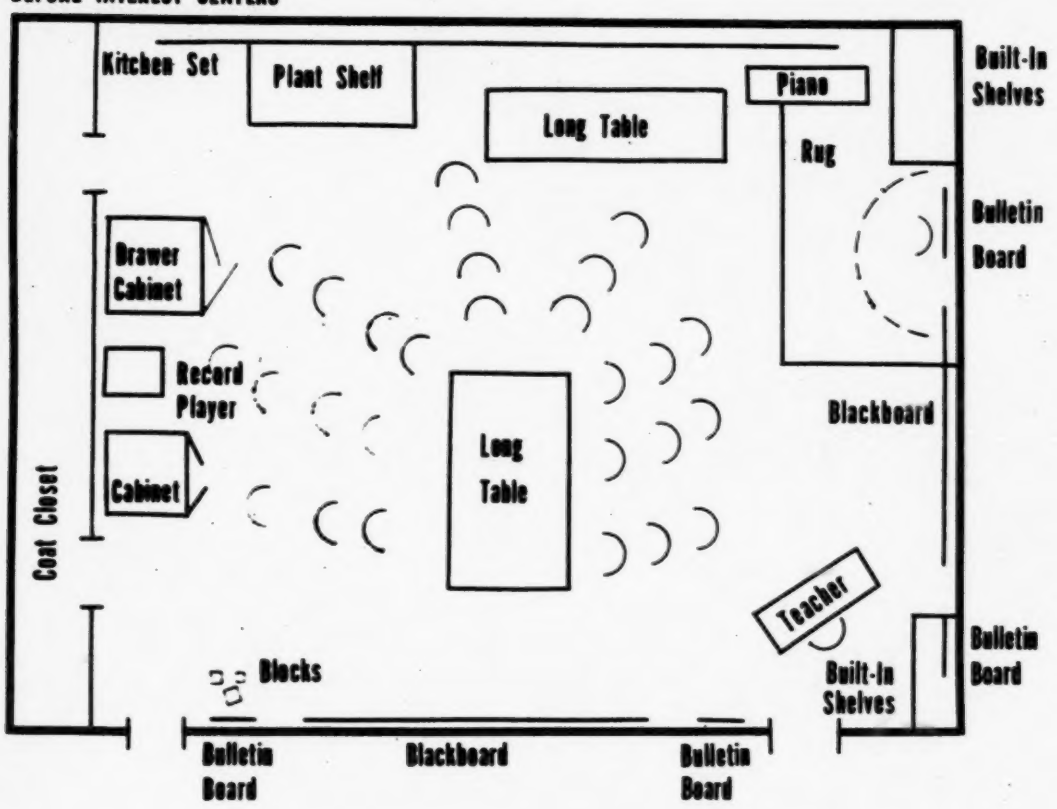
Floor Plans of One Classroom Before and During Interest Centers

Here is how one teacher changed the physical arrangement of her room by shifting the furniture.

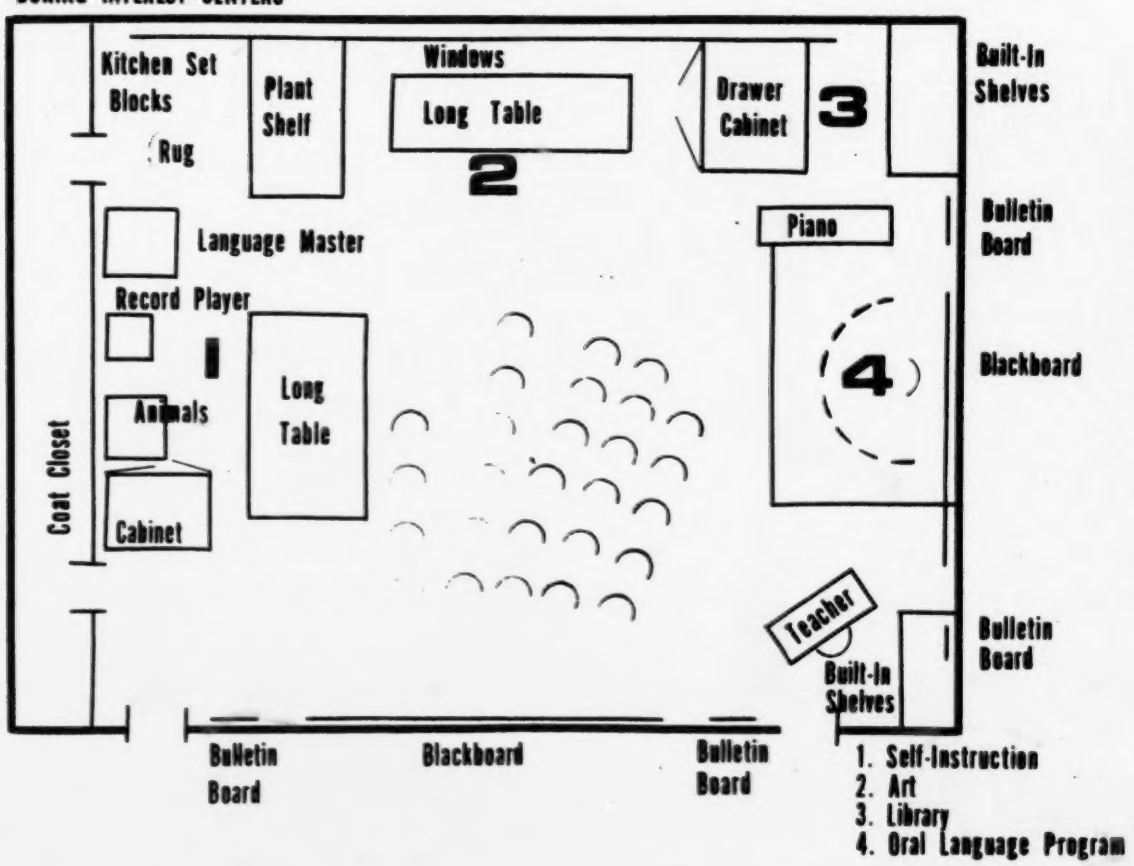
No new furniture was added.

Ideally, tables would be substituted for the desks. The teacher was not able to obtain tables. The desks could be pushed together.

BEFORE INTEREST CENTERS

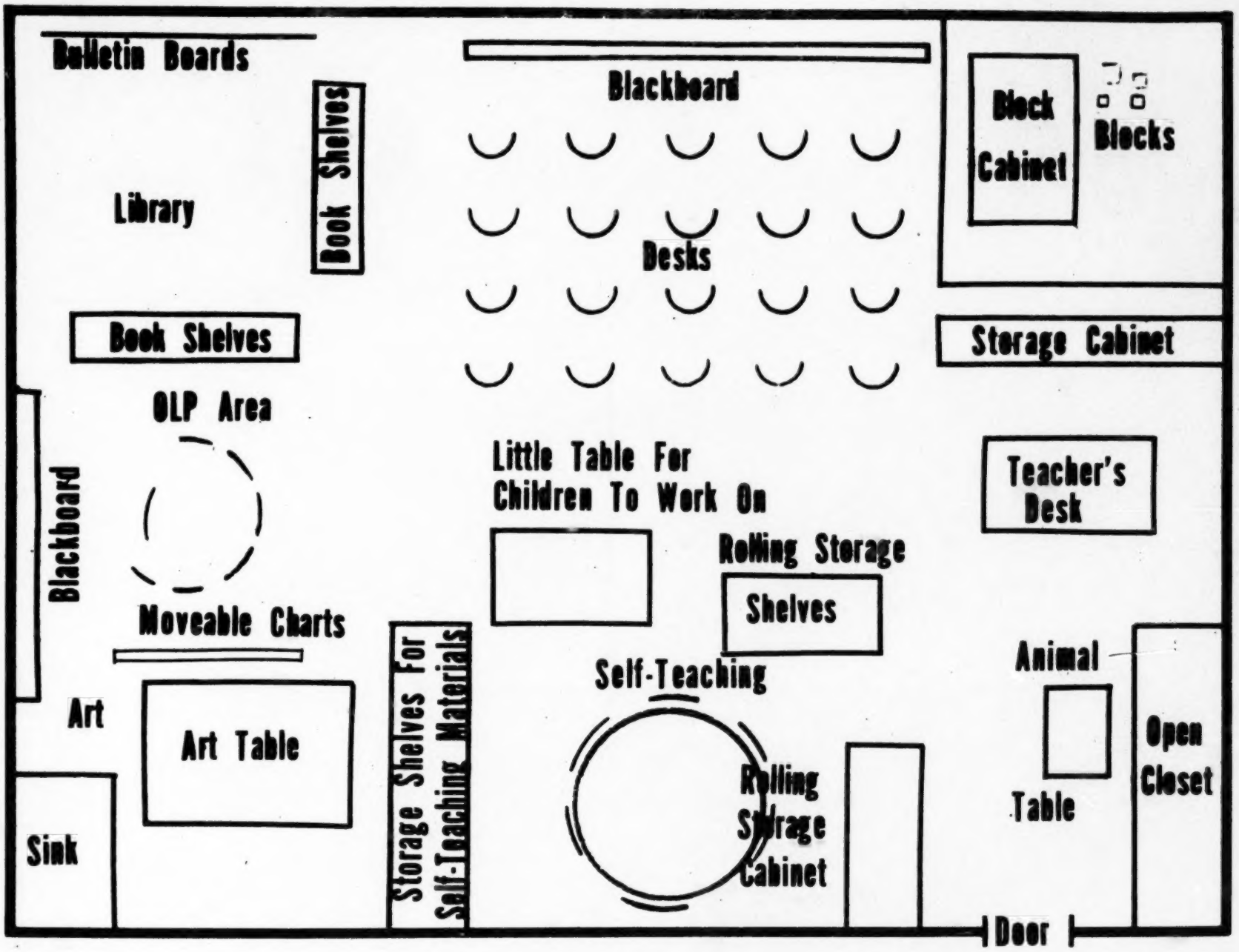


DURING INTEREST CENTERS



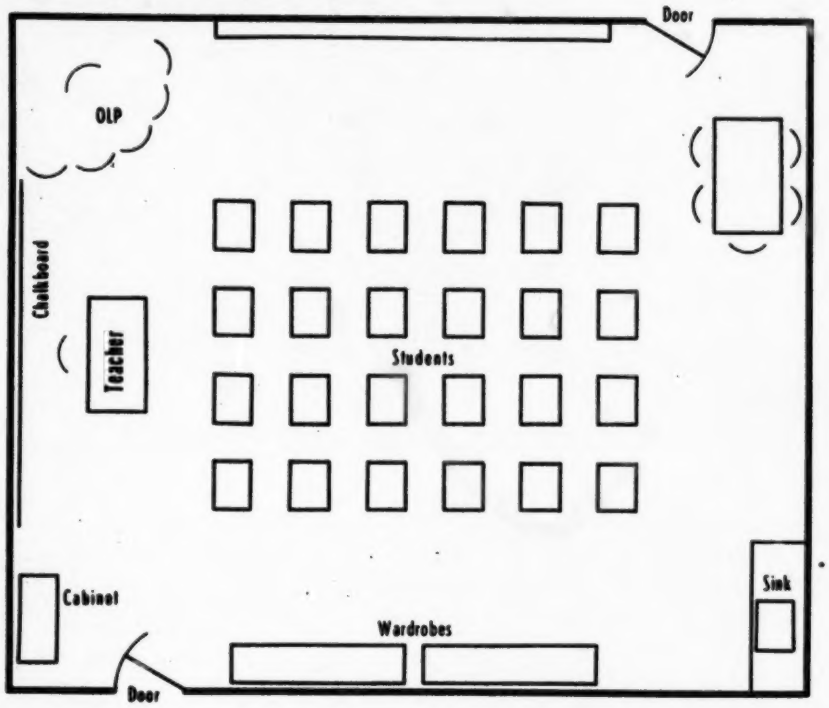
Floor Plan of One Classroom Using Interest Centers

Here is a floor plan of how another teacher rearranged her room for an Interest Center.

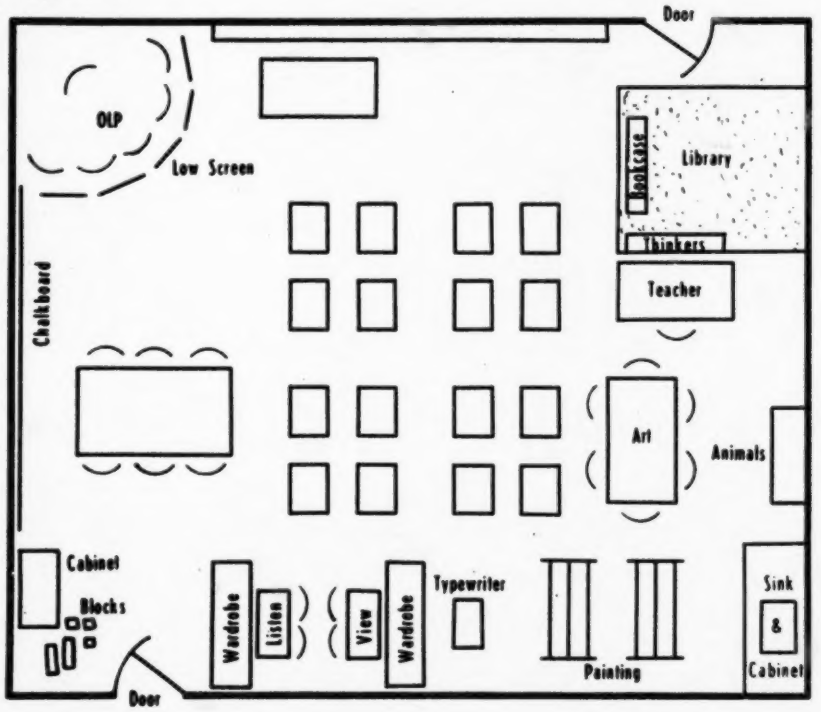


Floor Plans of One Classroom Before and During Interest Centers and Expanding Interest Centers

Before Interest Centers: The floor plan is that of a typical classroom with desks in rows.



During Interest Centers: By rearranging furniture and adding furniture, the teacher made Interest Centers. Some desks have been removed as tables are utilized, or desks can be pushed together.



Expanding Interest Centers: Notice that the tables have replaced the desks. Though this floor plan may or may not reflect it, the teacher is using Interest Centers throughout most of the school day.